

Emulating Models of Good Governance: Learning from the developments of the world's least corrupt countries

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Abstract

This article discusses three success stories of good governance, those in Finland, New Zealand and Singapore, and their ability to serve as benchmarks or models for developing countries seeking to eradicate corruption. The analysis shows that Finland and New Zealand are evolutionary cases with low-profile anti-corruption policies, whereas Singapore is a revolutionary case with an array of institutionalised anti-corruption measures providing a fast track to good governance. At first glance the latter case may appear appealing to developing countries, but in the current economic situation the case of Singapore is difficult to replicate as diminishing growth prospects undermine the viability of this option. In this sense the balance naturally leans towards the evolutionary 'social change' model, which is a cost-effective though slow path towards good governance. Whatever the preferred development path, it is vital that developing countries emulate and adapt success stories on their own terms. This ensures a sufficient degree of ownership and justification for the context-sensitive adjustment, dissemination and implementation of new ideas of controlling corruption.

Keywords: good governance, clean government, transparency, corruption, anti-corruption policy, ethics management, reform, social change, Finland, New Zealand, Singapore

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Introduction

Good governance has been promoted by donor countries and development aid organisations for several decades, but advances in this field are still more rhetoric than reality. Lessons learnt are far from encouraging, for it seems that policy decisions and interventions either have little impact on unethical behaviour or else they just work extremely slowly (see e.g. Chêne, 2015; Caiden, 2013a; 2013b; Mungiu-Pippidi et al., 2011). Intriguingly, corruption seems to correlate with the wealth and the development stage of a country, which raises justified criticism of the prevailing 'governance first' approach and related soft forms of conditionality of development aid (Santiso, 2001; Andrews, 2008).

If 'exporting' good governance does not sound particularly good idea, one might contemplate the same issue from another angle: the extent to which developing countries can potentially benefit from emulating the approaches and institutional arrangements of well governed wealthy Western democracies, albeit largely on their own terms. One reason behind the increased interest in such questions is the publishing of global rankings on corruption and other aspects of the quality of governance, the most familiar of these being the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) produced by Transparency International (see Hansen, 2012). Since its launch in the mid-1990s discussion about

learning from best practices has proliferated (e.g. Desta, 2006; McCusker, 2006; Abdulai, 2009; Matei and Matei, 2011; Chêne, 2015; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2015).

An illuminating example of this discourse is the blog post of Marie Chêne, Senior Research Coordinator at Transparency International, stating that “New Zealand, Denmark, Finland and Sweden have been consistently ranked at the top of the Corruption Perceptions Index and are perceived to be the least corrupt of all the countries surveyed. They are not perfect ... but many still want to know about how these countries have managed to contain corruption.” She also points to important differences in their roads to clean government: “The good news is that many countries can copy the transparency/accountability route to good governance. A recent study looking at the Finnish case concludes that, contrary to the Singapore’s top down approach to anti-corruption, which is economically unsustainable for most countries, this bottom-up model based on public trust, transparency and social capital is affordable, transferable and adaptable to very different political contexts.” (Chêne, 2011).

Such speculations introduce new elements into the on-going development discourse. This article aims to shed light on this issue by assessing the relevance of the world’s least corrupt countries for the anti-corruption policy design of developing countries. Our approach is motivated by the paucity of systematic reviews of countries perceived to be successful in controlling corruption, not to mention the assessments of the usefulness of their lessons to developing countries (cf. Chêne, 2015). Let us take a closer view of this discussion before defining our research problem and methodology more precisely.

Exporting the one-best-way governance model?

As pointed out by Andrews (2008), the one-best-way model proposed by the good governance agenda resembles a set of well meaning but problematic proverbs. It lacks consistency, seems inappropriate for use in the development dialogue and is not easily replicated. At worst, it may even impede the development of any fit-for-purpose governance model designed for each specific country context (cf. Pritchett and Woolcock, 2004). The major weakness of such an approach, Andrews claims, is the lack of an effective underlying theoretical framework to assist in understanding government roles and structures in development, starting from the conceptual confusion and multi-dimensionality of good governance (Gisselquist, 2012b).

Obviously, governments of developing countries may well be able to domesticate useful policies and measures from the least corrupt countries, especially by focussing on the time when these

countries had not reached their current level, building a picture with developmental challenges relatively similar to those of the developing countries of our time. Moreover, these lessons might be even more pertinent when derived from the experiences of other developing countries perhaps only one or two steps higher on the effectiveness ladder but more contextually connected (Andrews, 2008, p. 391). Three critical reservations regarding such views must be made, however. First, similar conditions or development phase of a country in a different historical period may actually imply significant differences in their situations. Second, choosing another developing country as a model with slightly better performance level is questionable, as their factual differences in critical respects may be marginal. Third, choosing contextually connected countries often means that the country should benchmark only poorly performing governments. Thus, in order for a developing country to learn from the governance practices of structurally similar countries the only available options are mostly bad ones.

If that is the case, narratives on the world's leading clean governments merit close scrutiny, even if their lessons may not be as adaptable as Chêne (2011) assumes. Theoretically speaking, their best features could be 'domesticated' to a developing country context with an appropriate adjustment process in mind. We may call this *context-sensitive emulation*, which, through locally determined goal-setting and awareness of the realities of a given context, prevailing structures, cultural codes and conditions for their change, improves chances of avoiding distorted forms of public sector renewal, such as the institutional dualism of continuing traditional practices that undermine the functioning of imported governance models (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith, 2005).

Designing an anti-corruption reform agenda

When considering the opportunities for learning from the good practices of governance, such learning should be incorporated into the broader anti-corruption policy framework of the given country (e.g. Matei and Matei, 2011; McCusker, 2006; Desta, 2006). A typology eminently appropriate for our purpose is that developed by Shim and Eom (2009), who have identified three distinct approaches to such a policy: (a) *Administrative reform* as the most commonly applied approach, which focusses on the improvement of the quality of bureaucracy and its monitoring as well as merit-based recruitment and promotion system; (b) *Law enforcement* or rule of law, often applied as a complement to administrative reform, guarantees that an appropriate system for prosecuting and punishing corruption is in place; and lastly, (c) *Social change*, which involves actors and forces outside the politico-administrative system, especially by increasing transparency and access to information, empowering citizens in public governance, cultivating a law-based

society, enabling a free press to perform its watchdog role, and decreasing people's acquiescence to corruption (cf. Chêne, 2015).

While translating policies into managerial practices, passing laws by fiat, creating new public institutions, or embarking on anti-corruption campaigns may not be effective, as pointed out by Kaufmann (2003). Traditional public sector management doctrines and conventional judiciary reform approaches may not, after all, be entirely suitable for most of the developing countries. More subtle managerial means – external accountability, transparency mechanisms, monitoring tools, a participatory 'voice' and incentive-driven approaches to prevention – should be used for providing checks and balances on traditional public institutions, in empowering non-traditional stakeholders, and in enhancing state capacity and mitigating the very unequal field of influence in countries striving for clean government (see Doig and Riley, 1998; cf. Desta, 2006; Hanna et al., 2011).

Objective and methodology

This article discusses the preconditions for developing countries to learn from the world's least corrupt nations and their development paths. The research questions are the following:

- What is the role of culture, democracy, political leadership and administrative machinery in combatting corruption in the world's least corrupt countries, and how to translate these into robust anti-corruption policy models?
- What are the major conditions for the domestication of development paths of least corrupt countries to developing country contexts?

Due to the elusive concept of 'good governance', this discussion, while maintaining its broad scope as a kind of background concept, focusses mainly on *corruption* (on conceptual issues, see Gisselquist, 2012a; 2012b). In this context 'good' is equated with 'clean' or 'non-corrupt'.

Even if we discuss countries with the cleanest governance in the world, this does not imply the best-practice or model country approach discussed earlier (Andrews, 2008). Suffice it to say here that it is not to be taken for granted that best-practice programmes can be in any straightforward way exported (or imported) to another national context (cf. Rose, 2005, p. 95). In parallel with this, our discussion does not take place within conventional donor-recipient relationship or within the development aid discourse in general, but anchors it on anti-corruption policy design in the developing country context.

Lastly, rather than importing, coping, imitating or replicating best practices we discuss *learning* about them. That is, while presenting the cases of least corrupt countries in order to learn lessons from their experiences, the idea is to learn or adopt different models or practices in a creative, contextually adjusted manner (Rose, 2005). For example, in 1962 New Zealand became the first English-speaking country successfully enact and implement the idea of Ombudsman originally developed in Scandinavia (Satyanand, 2005, p. 268). Clearly, when such an application takes place between countries in completely different conditions or development stages the challenges are amplified. A paradigmatic case is the introduction of contractual methods like competitive tendering, which may be even counterproductive to efficiency in a country in which the underlying market mechanism does not function properly (cf. Santiso, 2001; Andrews, 2008; Welsh and Woods, 2007).

Methodologically this article is based on historically-oriented institutional analysis (Gardner, 2006), which establishes a scenario for the three cases of Finland, New Zealand and Singapore, which are used to exemplify distinct types of ethics management models and related elements of national integrity systems. Presenting three advanced cases with different societal and historical contexts helps to assess the transferability of such prominent cases by comparing the ideal types constructed and assessing the conditions for their general applicability to developing country contexts (see Hekman, 1983; Brewer, 2003). Case selection will be next discussed in detail.

Case selection

The case selection starts by identifying country cases potentially applicable as learning exercises for other countries globally. For this purpose the top 20 countries according to the Corruption Perception Index 2014 of Transparency International were grouped into four country groups. Accordingly, the cleanest group is the *Nordic countries*, of which Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway belong to the global Top 5. Another advanced group is '*White Commonwealth*' countries of New Zealand, Canada, Australia and the UK, all in the Top 15 in the above ranking. A third distinguishable group is the *Central and Western European* countries, such as Switzerland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany and Belgium. They belong to the Top 15 in the CPI ranking. Lastly, in the Top 20 of the same ranking there are three countries from *East and Southeast Asia*, namely Singapore, Japan and Hong Kong (see Transparency International, 2014).

To keep the number of cases manageable, we select one case to represent each group, with the exception of Central and Western European countries, which are at least institutionally fairly similar to the Nordic countries, and may not bring added value for the purposes of this particular

comparison. Thus, one country has been chosen to represent each of the Nordic, White Commonwealth and Asian groups, namely Finland, New Zealand and Singapore. All are global benchmark cases with consistently high scores in annually published CPI rankings.

The fundamental difference between Finland and Singapore, as pointed out by Chêne (2011), is particularly illustrative from a policy and design perspective. These countries represent utterly different cases among the least corrupt countries, the first being a Nordic welfare society and the other an Asian developmental state. Finland is a case in point because it is a late-comer in the Nordic context in the sense that it broke away from its agrarian roots and poverty more slowly than the other Nordic countries. Singapore in turn is the most successful country in the Asian context and thus a benchmarking case in its own right, being different from many other least corrupt countries in that the majority of the population is of non-Western origin. Its highly positive image is well deserved, for it not only broke away from its pre-independence situation but is also surrounded by countries in which corrupt practices are widespread (Oehlers, 2005). The primary interest in our third case, New Zealand, is its long-lasting reputation as the least corrupt among the Commonwealth countries. Contrary to Finland's welfare state development and Singapore's developmentalism, New Zealand is among the best examples of an NPM-oriented mode of administrative reform, which adds a special flavour to the discussion of the national framework and ideological basis of anti-corruption policy (Schick, 2002).

All these three countries were already among the least corrupt countries in the mid-1990s when Transparency International started to publish its Corruption Perceptions Index. Even if there is good reason for caution regarding developing countries' chances to emulate the success stories of historically unique cases, we may see Finland, New Zealand and Singapore as potentially illustrative benchmarks when considering approaches to good governance and anti-corruption policy in particular. (On success and failure in curbing corruption in different countries, see Caiden, 2013a; 2013b; Chêne, 2015; Mongiu-Pippidi, 2015).

The Finnish model of good governance

Finland is a Nordic country with some 5 million inhabitants. It is well-known for its clean and transparent government, as evidenced by being continuously ranked as one of the least corrupt countries in the world. Finland's clean governance model is a result of a long historical development, first under Swedish rule until 1809, then as an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire, until the country finally gained independence in 1917. Many practices in political life and administration have their roots in traditional local customs and rule-making. The influence

of Sweden was likewise crucial throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Generally the underlying assumption has been, and to a large extent continues to be that the law, as is the case with rules in general, is to be respected (Joutsen and Keränen, 2009). Honesty and trustworthiness have likewise been perceived as virtues in Finnish culture.

Ordinary Finns do not encounter corruption in their daily lives, which partly explains why the majority of them trust their public institutions (Koskinen, 2003). Part of this picture is also a well-developed legislation, which, it should be noted, in the Finnish case has never included either a separate corruption law or a separate agency controlling corruption. Instead, corruption is treated as a part of poor governance and criminality, and is thus handled at all levels of the legislation and control systems, including the Constitution, the penal code, the civil service legislation, administrative directives and ethical norms (Tiihonen, 2003; OECD, 2000). This implies that corruption is approached in a holistic manner.

What explains the clean government in Finland? One might evince an aggregate image of the reasons for the low level of corruption in Finland in light of the following factors divided into six thematic groups (Tiihonen, 2003; Joutsen and Keränen, 2009; Anttiroiko and Valkama, 2005; Koskinen, 2003; OECD, 2000):

- Culture and characteristics of society: high GDP, egalitarianism, democratic mindset
- The court system and law enforcement: tradition of legality, trust in police etc.
- Administrative structures and principles: flat hierarchies, respect for the principles of good governance
- Civil servants: adequate salary, merit-based careers
- Transparent decision-making and administrative procedures
- Consensual political culture.

Culture and social conditions are the key factors in explaining the evolution of clean governance in Finland. First of all, Finnish society is democratic and egalitarian. It was one of the first countries in the world to grant all men and women the right to vote and stand for public office. The standard of living is moreover high, which, together with fairly even income distribution, means that the level of wages in both the public and the private sectors can be termed reasonable. These background factors also include an effective and inclusive education system. Such factors suggest that the Finnish public tend to have a relatively good capacity to understand, exercise and safeguard their rights (Joutsen and Keränen, 2009, p. 13).

An important element of the Finnish public administration is the impartiality and integrity of its civil servants. A special manifestation of such thinking is that an official may not participate in the taking of a decision which may benefit or, alternatively, harm his or her interests or those of another person with whom he or she has a dependent relationship. From a procedural point of view, the Finnish system is based on what is known as the referendary system, which is actually an old pillar of public administration (the referendary is an official responsible for preparing official matters for a decision-making body). It is also worth emphasising that the system is based on collective and collegiate decision-making, which tends to reduce the likelihood of corruption. An important dimension of all administrative work is transparency (Joutsen and Keränen, 2009).

By international standards Finland's anti-corruption measures and institutions are weak. It does not have a separate unit dedicated to the investigation or prosecution of corruption-related offences. This reflects the fact that the guiding principle for anti-corruption work is that corruption is not deemed to require separate legal provisions or separate supervisory bodies, nor even a separate strategy or action plan. Instead, anti-corruption measures are integrated into general good governance policy grounded on the rule of law and the culture that supports societal integrity (Joutsen and Keränen, 2009). As stated by Zook (2009), Finland's success lies in "the continuous effort to enhance and integrate effective policy, efficient institutions, and a vibrant civil society." Sometimes the national integrity system fails, however, as may occasionally be the case with the side-effects of consensual decision-making, the over-representation of the interests of construction companies in town planning or the prevalent overcompensation problem, as in the much discussed case of the excessive remuneration of CEO Mikael Lilius of the partly state-owned energy company Fortum in the latter half of 2000s.

New Zealand's development path

In the family of Commonwealth countries New Zealand stands out as a special case as one of the least corrupt countries in the world. New Zealand has a reputation as a well governed country: democracy is consolidated and stable, most political institutions function effectively, and the political and civil rights of citizens receive adequate protection (TINZ, 2013).

New Zealand is a small (4.6 million inhabitants) and remote country with a partly Polynesian history, yet as a former British colony has developed modern means of public sector management (Satyanand, 2005). Historically, its colonisation was begun mostly by Europeans intent on settlement in the 19th century.

Among the reasons for New Zealand's corruption-free reputation is the importance New Zealanders attached to the egalitarian ethos (Gregory, 2013, p. 27). Even if egalitarianism was stronger a few decades ago, values surveys suggest that it is still one of the hallmarks of New Zealand's culture. Such features provide major support for a high-trust society (TINZ, 2013; cf. Gregory and Zirker, 2013).

Institutionalisation of good governance has long historical roots in New Zealand. Legislation-wise two principal statutes against bribery and corruption were the Crimes Act of 1961 and the Secret Commissions Act of 1910. The Public Service Act of 1912 introduced a professional, merit-based public service system into the country. The cleanness of public administration is obviously one of the cornerstones of a pragmatic approach to anti-corruption policy, originally based on public service ethos, which embodied values like honour, duty, decency and a strong sense of the public interest (Gregory, 2013). As in many other developed countries, the administrative machinery is not the weakest link in the system. Rather, the problem lies in the way in which the political parties and politicians operate, which reflects perceived problems in the political culture in the country (TINZ, 2013; cf. Gregory and Zirker, 2013).

According to a recent National Integrity System (NIS) assessment, the strengths of the national integrity system of New Zealand include the effectiveness of the judiciary, the Office of the Auditor-General and the Ombudsman. Whistle-blower telephone lines have become common to enable people to report corruption and other inappropriate behaviour. And when cases of unethical behaviour by those in power are exposed, the media, political parties, the Auditor-General, law enforcement agencies, and the judiciary usually pursue these cases vigorously (TINZ, 2013).

Due to a relatively good situation regarding corruption in New Zealand, anti-corruption policy is not among its main political issues. There is even certain degree of inertia in country's defence of its clean image, including its reluctance to ratify (after signing in 2003) the United Nations Convention against Corruption (Gregory and Zirker, 2013). It actually builds its success neither on an over-arching anti-corruption strategy nor on a host of institutional measures (only recently has the government directed work to be undertaken on developing a national anti-corruption policy). In line with this, it does not have any one single agency charged with fighting corruption, nor has it seen the need to create an independent commission against corruption. However, it has a number of agencies that focus on the different elements in the fight against corruption, the two major organisations being Serious Fraud Office (SFO) and the New Zealand Police (Satyanand, 2005, p. 268; see SFO's website at <https://www.sfo.govt.nz/>).

In his assessment of New Zealand's road to good governance, Gregory (2013) emphasises that good governance must be assessed against the country's own standards that evolve over time and taking account of the historical context. For example, in spite of being a global benchmark case as a fairly non-corrupt country, there are developments that represent a threat to the country's non-corrupt reputation, ranging from uncontrolled parliamentary lobbying to growth of organised crime and increased income and educational inequalities (Gregory and Zirker, 2013).

Singapore's road to good governance

Singapore is the least corrupt country in Asia. In the CPI ranking of Transparency International it is at the same level as the Nordic countries. The country's remarkable success in eradicating corruption is a much cited success story in the anti-corruption discourse. What explains its unusual road to clean government?

Singapore is a multi-cultural country of some 5 million inhabitants, Chinese being the largest ethnic group. It developed as a trading port under British colonial rule, having in that respect a better start than many other colonised countries. In any case, corruption was a part of the everyday lives of Singaporeans during the colonial period, especially after the Second World War (Quah, 1988).

The fact that corruption is no longer a way of life in Singapore is an indication of the effectiveness of the anti-corruption policy adopted by the People's Action Party (PAP) government after it took office in June 1959. It took decisive measures to change the corrupt system. Among the first decisive steps was the establishment of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) in the early 1950s as an independent anti-corruption agency, actually the first of its kind in the world (Quah, 2011, p. 133). This resulted from an initiative by the colonial government after a major corruption case involving the police. In spite of this, corruption continued to be endemic, for reasons typical of developing countries (Tan, 1999).

The PAP government's strategy for dealing with the problem of corruption started from top political leaders, who made themselves role models for civil servants, divesting themselves of commercial ties, demonstrating high work ethics, avoiding any behaviour that could be construed as abuse of power, and showing zero tolerance for corrupt behaviour. By personal example they sowed the seeds of an atmosphere of honesty and integrity (Tan, 1999).

The PAP government relied heavily on the Prevention of Corruption Act (POCA) and the CPIB to spearhead its anti-corruption strategy. The primary aim of the POCA and CPIB was to reduce

opportunities for corruption and to increase the penalties for corrupt behaviour if detected (Quah, 1988). In the late 1980s the essential pillars of Singapore's effective anti-corruption policy were in place and started to bear fruit. It was important that the CPIB since its inception investigated and prosecuted many leading politicians and bureaucrats, signalling to society as a whole the determination to eradicate corruption (Quah, 2007, p. 25).

An important part of the PAP strategy was to tackle the root causes of corruption in the civil service. More than anything, this meant constantly improving salaries and working conditions. Accordingly, the salaries of Singaporean civil servants are by Asian standards fairly high (Quah, 1988). The same policy was adopted with politicians. Top politicians have reiterated Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's mantra that political leaders should be paid the top salaries that they deserve in order to ensure clean and honest government (Quah, 1988). This is a problematic issue in countries like Singapore, for such an act can be interpreted as a "rent extraction" by a leader insulated from effective democratic control (Di Tella and Fisman, 2004, p. 477).

All in all, corruption still persists in Singapore, as indeed in all societies in one form or another, but Singapore is not a corrupt society (Quah, 1988). However, according to a context-specific point of view Singapore's corruption can be said to be distinctly political in nature, i.e. the ruling party's use of public resources to retain a pre-eminent position in politics (Oehlers, 2005, p. 149).

Discussion: Learning from the development paths of the top performers

The three cases discussed above show that Finland and New Zealand are countries with essentially evolutionary anti-corruption development path. In spite of obvious differences they have much in common in their pursuit of well-governed society. Similar features can also be found in many Central and Western European countries, thereby permitting the generalisation that the Western countries with the least corrupt governments in the world have achieved their positions through evolutionary processes rooted in modernisation, which is obviously difficult to emulate. Among the top performers Singapore stands out as a decidedly different case, an Asian country – even if a former British trading post and Crown Colony – with a characteristically revolutionary approach to anti-corruption policy. Hong Kong resembles it in many ways (Abdulai, 2009) likewise the developments of West-emulating Japan. The more recent achievements of South Korea and Taiwan reflect the same developmentalist model (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2015, p. 149). It is worth stressing that the terms 'evolutionary' and 'revolutionary' are here justified by empirical cases, as the special features of their development paths differ in terms of the radicalness and speed of change. This implies that even if the 'social change' track associated with cases like Finland and New Zealand is

here called evolutionary, it can also be revolutionary if exceptional societal momentum produces rapid, dramatic changes. In any case, we may use these two categories to build two ideal types of anti-corruption policy, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Two paths towards good governance: evolutionary vs. revolutionary models.

<i>Features</i>	Evolutionary integrity-based ethics management model	Revolutionary compliance-based ethics management model
Country group	Western (e.g. Nordic and White Commonwealth countries)	Asian (e.g. Singapore and Hong Kong)
Background agenda	Welfare and equality (social agenda); welfarism; managerialism	Development and growth (economic agenda); developmentalism
Democracy	Democratic system, free press, civic liberties, multi-party system	Semi-authoritarian system (soft authoritarianism), limited freedoms, dominant-party system
Role of politics	Political pluralism; consensual institutional support for national integrity system	Personalised leadership; leading politicians' critical role in supporting anti-corruption policy
Role of administration and anti-corruption agency (ACA)	Clean, transparent administration; no fully-fledged anti-corruption commission or agency	Clean administration; special role of vigilant anti-corruption agency
Major structural support for anti-corruption policy	Cultural values and norms	Political leadership and institutional measures
Development of anti-corruption policy	Evolutionary; piecemeal, integrated policy	Revolutionary; masterminded anti-corruption policy
Approach to anti-corruption policy	Weak; holistic approach; no specific anti-corruption policy or legislation	Strong; spearhead approach; anti-corruption policy and anti-corruption law have an important role
Characteristic measures of anti-corruption policy	Lenient measures: ethical and cultural codes and principles, instructing, internalisation of norms and values	Tough measures: investigation, compliance, control, punishment

These two ideal types point to fundamental differences in the premises of anti-corruption policy. In a semi-authoritarian society like Singapore, strong leadership and an efficient anti-corruption agency are necessary preconditions for successful policy and related cultural change. The process was justified by a promised reward, that is, economic growth. In the cases of Finland and New Zealand the development follows different logic: the cultural background facilitates non-corrupt procedures which rely on openness and democratic values.

Let us return to a question of whether good governance can be imposed from outside. On the basis of the recent literature as well as the observations of the development paths of successful countries, we may state with conviction that exporting good governance is well-nigh a mission impossible and at best slow and cumbersome. The paradigmatic form of such an 'export' is the donor's attempt to impose good governance as a part of a development aid package. Such efforts have not born fruit, mostly because the promotion of good governance requires local ownership, a realistic timeline for change and a sufficient understanding of the political economy constraints on the development in the given case (Unsworth, 2007; Smillie, 2007), that is, conditions which have not generally been

met in development aid efforts. In addition, there is an acknowledged need to link the promotion of good governance directly to the achievement of better development outcomes rather than to the replication of a particular political model (Welsh and Woods, 2007).

The situation, however, does not seem to be much better outside the donor-beneficiary relation, as in designing developing countries' anti-corruption policies, for according to the relevant literature such reforms yield only slight evidence of having much impact on the factual level of corruption (Hanna et al., 2011; Chêne, 2015; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2015). To succeed, they require, among other things, strong political will, inclusiveness, a sufficient salary level throughout the public sector, and an efficient anti-corruption agency, as seen in the cases of Singapore and Hong Kong (Abdulai, 2009; cf. Chêne, 2015), which have proven difficult to replicate. The challenges are likely to be greater if anti-corruption policy is based on a social change approach derived from the experiences of cases like Finland and New Zealand.

Such findings cast doubt on Chêne's (2011; 2015) idea that the Finnish-style social change model would provide a feasible and cost-effective model for developing countries' anti-corruption policy. Contrary to such an assumption, features like trust, transparency and social capital are difficult to introduce into a country without fruitful soil and a momentum for change. On the other hand, it has by now become apparent that corruption cannot be overcome by fighting against corruption alone (Kaufmann, 2012); it requires a more holistic integrity-building process, in which the Finnish or similar models may effectively serve as benchmarks (Monaghan and Graycar, 2016). A slightly similar idea was presented by Zook (2009), who speculated that the Finnish model might work if applied in parallel with the democratisation of a country.

Thus the chances for successfully exporting good governance are slim, as are the chances of 'importing' it – if the latter implies a lack of contextual adjustment. As concluded by Mungiu-Pippidi and others (2011), "[t]here is a gross inadequacy of institutional imports from developed countries which enjoy rule of law to developing contexts." However, there is always hope in the presence of a sufficient degree of local ownership and understanding of the requirements of successful implementation. To generalise, narratives of the development paths of top performers can indubitably serve as a source of inspiration to politicians, public managers and civic leaders in search of new ways of curbing corruption. Singapore in particular is an instructive story with its identifiable measures, short time span and clear outcomes, whereas countries like Finland and New Zealand have fewer landmarks to point out, implying a fuzzier picture of the causalities affecting the process (see e.g. Rose, 2005). This point is worth careful consideration when assessing the feasibility of the social change approach.

Paradoxically, even if the model of Singapore may appear feasible from the point of view of developing countries, it should be remembered that it was introduced in tandem with an export-oriented industrial policy at a time of expansion in world trade. Hence, if developing countries in times of disrupted global capitalism have difficulties in achieving the growth needed to finance large-scale anti-corruption interventions, greater efforts should be invested in improving the clarity and operational effectiveness of the social change approach even if this is demanding in terms of societal and cultural conditions and likely to be a detour rather than a shortcut to good governance.

Conclusion

It is challenging to transfer the best parts of empirically constructed good governance models to a developing country context. Successful Western countries apparently have important similarities concerning the role of culture, democracy, political leadership and administrative machinery in combatting corruption, which are embedded in their evolutionary development paths. These are exemplified by the cases of Finland and New Zealand. Singapore, on the other hand, is among top performers a notable exception as it puts special emphasis on its political leadership and anti-corruption agency in eradicating corruption. Paradoxically, while Singapore's revolutionary compliance-based approach includes appealing elements from the point of view of developing countries, not least because of high remuneration for politicians and civil servants as well as high economic growth that is supposed to benefit all members of society, it starts to look unattainable to most of the developing countries in today's world. Hence social change approach emerges as a valid option, even though it is hardly a shortcut to good governance. Neither an evolutionary nor a revolutionary model is superior as such; rather, what is important is that learning from success stories is used as a source of inspiration with local ownership and context-sensitive adjustment in mind.

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